

## No New Gas Burning Power Plant at Peterhead V.2

*A Friends of the Earth Scotland Briefing  
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### Summary

In February 2022, SSE in partnership with oil and gas company Equinor submitted a planning application to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit to build a new gas burning power station with carbon capture and storage (CSS) alongside the already existing Peterhead power site. SSE were forced to resubmit their EIA after independent research found that underestimated emissions from the plant by up to five times.

Friends of the Earth Scotland believes the development poses a significant risk to Scotland's climate emission reduction targets. The Scottish Government has the final say on if this development goes ahead and cannot approve the new gas burning power plant in Peterhead.

- The existing Peterhead power site is already Scotland's single biggest polluter. To limit warming to 1.5°C the Scottish Government cannot allow a major emitter to get even worse.
- Research shows that a rapid transition to 100% renewable energy is both technically feasible and affordable with the right policy measures. Making CCS unnecessary in power generation.
- Gambling on an unproven technology to reduce our emissions puts us on the path to climate chaos. The most effective way to reduce carbon emissions is not to create them in the first place by stopping burning fossil fuels.
- Workers in high polluting fields cannot wait on speculative technologies with a track record of failure; a Just Transition for workers means secure, stable, well paid jobs in fields we know will reduce our carbon emissions and making that transition now.

### Introduction

In February 2022, SSE plc and Norwegian oil and gas company Equinor submitted a section 36 planning application to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit to build a new gas burning power station with CCS. **The new plant would be additional to the already existing 1,180MW gas fired power station, which has been amongst Scotland's biggest polluters for the past 5 years.**

There is also no clear plan for phasing down the existing plant and the developers have been forced to admit they could both run at the same time. If approved, the power station would be running out to early 2050s which is well past the point by which both Scotland and the UK

as a whole are due to meet net zero emissions.

**SSEs new Environmental Impact Assessment acknowledges that the plant will be three times more climate polluting than initially feared.** These pollution figures are likely still a gross underestimate of climate emissions because SSE's dodgy carbon capture claims have never been achieved anywhere on earth. Burning more fossil fuels will do nothing to lower our energy bills and serves only to undermine the transition to clean, green, renewable energy. **SSE acknowledge that their plans will have a significant adverse effect on the climate. The Scottish Government has no choice but to reject this dangerous, damaging, climate wrecking proposal.**

## Risk to Climate Targets

The International Energy Agency has been clear that there should be no new investment in oil and gas infrastructure if we are to have any hope of limiting dangerous global heating to the internationally agreed limit of 1.5°C. **Expansion of fossil fuel production and infrastructure is inconsistent with preventing climate breakdown and any new infrastructure or investment will only serve to entrench our reliance on volatile oil and gas.**

The Scottish Government is not currently on track to meet its climate commitments and has already missed 9 out of its last 13 legally enshrined climate targets. An increase in climate emissions at the power station risks Scotland once again missing these vital targets. **SSE has conceded in planning documents submitted to the Energy Consents Unit that "should both plants (at the site) operate simultaneously this will result in emissions increase [that] would represent 10.7% of the Scottish Carbon Budget in 2034."**

There is an urgent need for action to support people now, and to build a more resilient, affordable energy system to prevent climate breakdown and future social crises. **The Scottish Government should not be investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure that runs the significant risk of locking households across Scotland into a volatile and exploitative energy system.**

Fossil fuel companies are delaying the transition to renewable energy by pushing dangerous technologies such as carbon capture technology that have a track record of failure. **This is now the third attempt at CCS at the Peterhead power station and the third time the promise of jobs and corresponding economic prosperity has been pledged in the Northeast of Scotland.** In 2017 it was reported that the UK Government had spent £100 million on a competition for developing CCS before scrapping the project entirely. We cannot allow public money to continue to be wasted on speculative technology for no reason other than to allow oil and gas companies to continue business as usual.

## Fund and Support a Real Just Transition

CCS has time and again been over-promised and under delivered on achieving climate ambitions as well as secure jobs. Workers and communities dependent on the current energy system will be significantly affected by the transition to a renewable energy system and should not be strung along with promises of a technology that continues to fail.

The Scottish Government cannot afford to put the livelihoods of workers and communities most affected by the transition on the line once again by letting the transition be dictated by the whims of corporate industry. The closure of Grangemouth by Petroineos shows big business will not plan for a just transition for workers, causing undue stress on the workers, families and communities at the heart of these industries. The £280m the UK and Scottish Governments are offering private businesses to chase the CCS pipe-dream would be better spent supporting a real Just Transition.

### Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is a dangerous distraction

CCS has long history of failure and should not be gambled on to hit our climate targets. A report by the Institute for Energy, Economics and Financial Analysis described CCS as a “decarbonisation pipe dream”. Of the 13 CCS plants they examined, seven underperformed, two failed completely and one was mothballed. **CCS does not capture all of the carbon emissions generated from a power station, nor does it effectively reduce the highly potent greenhouse gas methane which has a global warming potential 25 times higher than carbon dioxide.**

**No power plant project in the world has managed to successfully and consistently capture 90% of carbon emissions.** Additional energy is also required to power CCS equipment. This energy is provided from the plant itself or a different power source. This is known as the “energy penalty” and means that capture rates are often far lower than promised. SSE have still not published detailed information on their energy penalty.

### Prioritise renewable energy & energy efficiency measures

Our energy system is already dominated by private companies who have continued to extract phenomenal profits at a time of crisis, as the climate crisis escalates, and ordinary people are having to choose between heating and eating. Instead of backing an exploitative and incredibly precarious fossil fuel future the Scottish Government must instead use its powers to establish a publicly owned National Energy Company empowered to drive new renewable generation, renewable heating and energy efficiency projects, alongside greater support for local authorities and communities to develop their own locally owned renewable projects.

**If you have any further questions or thoughts, please contact:  
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